



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

AUG 03 2007

Mr. Jeffrey N. Wennberg  
Chair, U.S. Governmental Advisory Committee  
Commissioner  
VT Department of Environmental Conservation  
103 South Main Street, Building 1 South  
Waterbury, VT 05641-0401

Dear Mr. Wennberg:

On behalf of Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, I would like to thank you for the Governmental Advisory Committee's (GAC) advice of May 24, 2007 reporting on its April 2007 meeting and providing valuable recommendations to the United States on possible projects to increase the relevance of the CEC to our constituents in the United States, as well as your advice on the 2007 Council Session. Administrator Johnson enjoyed the opportunity to meet with the members of your committee who attended the recent Council Session in Morelia, Mexico.

As you may have heard, the June 2007 CEC Council Session was a great success, thanks in large measure to the helpful advice, provided by the GAC and the National Advisory Committee (NAC), to open a major portion of the Council Session to the public. As a result, the Council revised the meeting format to promote visibility and public engagement, which truly helped to increase the relevance of the CEC to our audience.

This public portion of the session included presentations about CEC's plans to support cooperation among indigenous peoples and grants for local communities, as well as how the CEC is using the Google Earth tool to enhance public access to the PRTR and North American Atlas projects. The Council also agreed to support a workshop to begin developing a green building rating system in Mexico. In the in-camera session, the Council explored two more issues discussed in your advice: the State of the Environment Report and analysis on Environmental Trends. In both cases, the decision was made to move forward.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for the seven project proposals that you prepared with the goal of increasing the relevance of the CEC to our constituents in the United States. We have already shared these project proposals with our experts, who will be considering them for the 2008-2010 CEC Operational Plan and the 2010-2015 CEC Strategic Plan. I have provided our initial reaction to these projects in this

letter, and my staff will follow up with you in more detail to share the next steps to be taken on each of these proposals.

Three of the projects that you proposed may be a good fit for ongoing CEC work. For example, the proposal on the North American Climate Registry will be considered in the context of the new CEC Air Vision, affirmed at the Council Session, which includes potential work on greenhouse gas emissions. We will explore with the Parties and our federal agencies whether the CEC is the appropriate forum for this registry project. Similarly, the Renewable Energy Credit Certification Program fits under the CEC project on renewable energy, "Promoting the North American Renewable Energy Market." The Renewable Energy Experts Committee met last month in Zacatecas, Mexico to discuss the project. We have shared this project with our renewable energy experts for their consideration as the project continues to develop. Likewise, the proposal on Expanding Sustainable Trade is a good fit for the current work of the Trade and Environment Working Group (TEWG). We have shared this project with the TEWG, and are recommending that they include aspects of this program in their ongoing project, "Assessing the Environmental Effects of NAFTA."

Three of the proposals require further discussion to see whether they are appropriate projects for the CEC. For example, the proposal on the Impact of the Informal Economy on the Environment requires further exploration. The project on Promoting Environmental Compliance fits into the program area of the Enforcement Working Group, and we will share this proposal with them to see if it would be helpful for them as a next step. For the proposal on the Resolution of Citizen-Identified Environmental Problems, given the jurisdictional issues inherent in this process, this program may be better implemented by an organization other than the CEC. We would like to identify these organizations, facilitate interchange of ideas and best practices, and promote them to the CEC's audience. We will provide more information on this idea as it develops.

The proposal on the North American Fellowship and Visiting Scholars Programs is an excellent idea which we believe has great promise for increasing the relevance of the CEC to our academic constituencies. We have drafted a proposal based on the project description, which we will submit to the Parties for their consideration.

Regarding your suggestion to pursue opportunities through the North American Development Bank (NADB), I would like to clarify that the NADB resources are quite limited and fully allocated at this time. NADB grants are restricted to projects related to water and wastewater infrastructure. However, the U.S. and Mexico are working jointly under the Border 2012 program to address sites that contain waste tires in the US-Mexico border region. So far, the program has been working on two sites, Centinela and Innor in the Baja California Area, and has begun work on a site in Ciudad Juarez, removing a total of approximately 3 million tires.

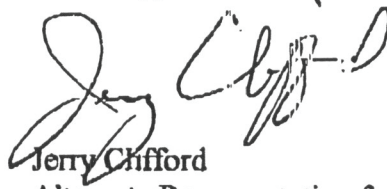
Additionally, thank you for the GAC's suggestions about increasing the awareness of the CEC and its programs, for example through updating the CEC website,



creating a marketing presentation, and utilizing distance learning and partner organizations. We will consider these recommendations in more detail as the CEC begins to develop a more formal communications strategy. Regarding the Limitrophe Project, this may be something for us to consider under our work with indigenous communities or under our biodiversity program. We will also consider your recommendation on Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment (TEIA).

As you can see, your guidance is highly valued. Your feedback was helpful to us in the planning of the CEC Council Session, and will be helpful as we develop the 2008-2010 Operational Plan. We look forward to discussing these projects with you in more detail, and continuing to work together over the summer to strengthen the CEC as a catalyst for cooperative action, and to build its relevance to United States constituencies and to North America. We look forward to seeing you at your Fall meeting.

Sincerely,



Jerry Chifford  
Alternate Representative for the  
United States

cc: M. Dolores Wesson, Chair, U.S. National Advisory Committee  
Irene Henriques, Chair, Joint Public Advisory Committee  
Members of the U.S. Governmental Advisory Committee